SN 22.55 — An Inspired Saying

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Text

Linked Discourses 22.55

6. Involvement

An Inspired Saying

At Sāvatthī.

There the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment: "'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine.' A mendicant who makes such a resolution can cut off the lower fetters."

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, "But sir, how can a mendicant who makes such a resolution cut off the lower fetters?"

"Mendicant, take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in their teaching. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in their teaching.

They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness.

They don't truly understand form—which is impermanent—as impermanent. They don't truly understand feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is impermanent—as impermanent.

They don't truly understand form—which is suffering—as suffering. They don't truly understand feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is suffering—as suffering.

They don't truly understand form—which is not-self—as not-self. They don't truly understand feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is not-self—as not-self.

They don't truly understand form—which is conditioned—as conditioned. They don't truly understand feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is conditioned—as conditioned.

They don't truly understand that form will vanish. They don't truly understand that feeling … perception … choices … consciousness will vanish.

But a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't regard form as self … They don't regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self.

They truly understand form—which is impermanent—as impermanent. They truly understand feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is impermanent—as impermanent.

They truly understand form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is suffering—as suffering.

They truly understand form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is not-self—as not-self.

They truly understand form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness—which is conditioned—as conditioned.

They truly understand that form will vanish. They truly understand that feeling … perception … choices … consciousness will vanish.

It's because of the vanishing of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness that a mendicant who makes such a resolution— 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine'— can cut off the lower fetters."

"Sir, you say that a mendicant who makes such a resolution can cut off the lower fetters.

But how are they to know and see in order to end the defilements without delay?"

"Mendicant, an unlearned ordinary person worries about things that aren't a worry. For an unlearned ordinary person worries: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine.'

A learned noble disciple doesn't worry about things that aren't a worry. For a learned noble disciple doesn't worry: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine.'

Should consciousness involved with form, supported by form, established on form continue to remain, with a sprinkling of relishing it would grow, increase, and mature.

Or should consciousness involved with feeling remain …

Or should consciousness involved with perception remain …

Or should consciousness involved with choices, supported by choices, established on choices continue to remain, with a sprinkling of relishing it would grow, increase, and mature.

Suppose, mendicant, you were to say: 'Apart from form, feeling, perception, and choices, I will describe the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and reappearing, its growth, increase, and maturity.' That is not possible.

If a mendicant has given up greed for the form element, the support is cut off, and there is no establishment of consciousness.

If a mendicant has given up greed for the feeling element …

perception element …

choices element …

consciousness element, the support is cut off, and there is no establishment of consciousness. Since that consciousness does not become established and does not grow, not making choices, it is freed.

Being free, it's stable. Being stable, it's content. Being content, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended … there is nothing further for this place.'

The ending of the defilements without delay is for one who knows and sees this."